Problems of Students in Learning Arabic Language at Madrasah Aliyah

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Abstract
Arabic is one of the subjects studied at the State Aliyah Madrasah. However, Arabic is only taught in a limited number of hours, as a result, problems arise in learning Arabic where students find it difficult to understand learning Arabic. So, it is necessary to do a study to identify these problems. This research aims to identify the problems of learning Arabic in the Three Cities of Padang Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) of West Sumatra. This study used a qualitative method with the type of case study, data sources were taken from ten informants through direct interviews using a set of interview protocols. All data were analyzed thematically using NVivo 12 software. The research findings found six themes regarding students' problems in learning Arabic. The six themes are i) differences in educational background, ii) low vocabulary mastery, iii) lack of teacher initiative to develop an Arabic-language environment, iv) lack of language labs, v) less varied learning methods, and vi) unsupportive environment. The results of this study can be used as initial data for future researchers in studying this problem in different contexts.

INTRODUCTION
In Islamic studies, there are many branches of knowledge that are interrelated and support each other. If explored further, all branches of knowledge in Islam originate from one main reference, namely the Quran (Hidayat, 2016). As the main book for science developed within an Islamic framework, the Arabic-language the Quran also requires that all sciences at the beginning of its development use Arabic as the language of instruction for a large number of books on science and even technology (Pane, 2018). This situation eventually brought Arabic to a more important and respectable place in the realm and structure of knowledge (Hizbullah & Mardiah, 2015).

The importance of the Arabic language then paved the way for educational institutions to provide Arabic language instruction for students. In studying any field of knowledge, students are required to master Arabic as a basic element for mastering knowledge at a later stage (Nisa‘, 2018). In Islamic studies, especially learning and mastering Arabic is absolutely necessary. That is the basis for Islamic educational institutions to place Arabic in an important position (Hizbullah & Mardiah, 2015).

All of these elements play an important role in the learning process. Related parties, such as teachers and schools are responsible for the fulfillment and availability of elements
that can make the Arabic language learning process successful in schools (Lang & Anwar Us., 2017). Madrasah Aliyah is one of the levels of Islamic secondary education in Indonesia. At that school, Arabic is taught as one of the supporting subjects for mastering Islamic study material (Huda, 2016). As an important subject, Arabic should receive the best possible attention and treatment (Mahfud & Zaenuddin, 2018). In his teaching at school, Arabic turns out to be one of the lessons that face quite a lot of problems (Admin & Amirudin, 2017). As an illustration, a study at the Ministry of Religion stated that even in the basic competence in the form of reading skills which is the core of learning at Madrasah Aliyah, the ability of students in this aspect is quite low (Sulaiman et al., 2018).

This is related to various factors that influence it, such as students coming from different educational backgrounds, lack of vocabulary owned by students, teachers being less motivated to practice Arabic outside the classroom, the unavailability of language laboratories as a support for learning Arabic, competence teachers who are not up to standard, the environment is not supportive enough to achieve a good learning process and the set study time is not enough (Wahdah, 2020).

The problems that occur generally range from linguistic and non-linguistic problems. Nur, (2018) maps the teaching of Arabic into two major groups, namely: 1) Linguistic factors, namely factors that include several aspects in the form of differences in language characteristics from each other, differences in particular between Arabic and Indonesian. 2) Non-linguistic factors, it revolves around the problem of students' abilities with their psychological factors and differences in the social and cultural conditions of Arab society as native speakers of the language and also the conditions of learning in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, according to Sadtono, the problems of learning Arabic are linguistic problems, namely sound science, grammar and vocabulary mastery (Astuti, 2016; Fahrurrozi, 2014; Sa‘adah, 2019; Takdir, 2020). Meanwhile, non-linguistic problems come from students, teachers, materials, methods, time, facilities, and the environment, both at school and where the students themselves live (Arafat et al., 2020). It can be broadly identified that non-linguistic problems are often more complex in many educational institutions. This certainly has an impact on the disruption of the learning process and ultimately affects the achievement of students in learning (Nisa et al., 2023).

There are several articles that study Arabic language learning including problems of learning Arabic Admin & Amirudin, (2017), Problems of Learning Arabic and its Solutions for Arabs (Takdir, 2020), Problems of Learning Arabic in View of the Origin of Student Schools, Problems of Linguistics in translating Arabic into Indonesian (Perdana, 2017).

After the authors explored more deeply, the researchers above only focused on problems in general or only discussed problems that were not specific in their spatial scale. As for the problems of learning Arabic at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 3 Padang, it has not been touched on and discussed by previous researchers. Thus, the author needs to conduct research to reveal what are the problems of learning Arabic experienced by students, so that it can become a source of input for future educators in overcoming difficulties in learning Arabic at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN).

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study type, according to Taylor, (2013); Bartlett & Vavrus, (2016); Murniyetti et al., (2016); Martell, (2017); Zhang et al., (2018); Zhou et al., (2021) case studies are a type of research if the researcher wants to observe in depth a phenomenon or incident both individually and in community groups. Referring to the opinion above, related to the issues and problems that the authors raise in this study, this type of research is very appropriate to use.

The data source was taken from ten informants who were active students at the Three State Madrasah Aliyah, Padang City. All informants were selected using the technique of purposive sampling. According to Engkizar et al., (2018); Elkhaire et al.,
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(2020); Syafril et al., (2021) selection of informants must meet four criteria, namely still active in the field being researched, having competence related to the problem being studied, willing to take the time to provide information to researchers, and honestly provide information in accordance with the facts that occur in the field.

After the interviews were completed, all informants were taken, a transcript of the interview data was carried out, and then the themes were taken in accordance with the objectives and needs of the research data. According to Terry et al., (2017); Castleberry & Nolen, (2018); Clarke & Braun, (2018); Engkizar et al., (2018); Herzog et al., (2019); thematic analysis is an analytical technique that researchers can use in analyzing the results of interviews so that they can be seen clearly and easily understood by readers.

The entire thematic analysis process above was carried out using NVivo 12 qualitative analysis software. The use of NVivo 12 qualitative software analysis aims to display research results (themes) with graphics or images produced by the NVivo software used. Thematic analysis can be carried out with the help of the NVivo software so that researchers can easily display research results (Castleberry, 2014; Zamawe, 2015; Engkizar et al., 2021; Eriyanti et al., 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the author's interviews with ten informants (students of the Three State Madrasah Aliyah, Padang City), the results of the analysis actually found that there were six problematic themes of students in learning Arabic. The six problems can be seen in Figure 1, below:

**Fig 1. Description of student problems in learning Arabic**

Furthermore, so that the results of the research and discussion in this article are more interesting to read and easy to understand, the author will display excerpts from short interviews with informants based on one main theme which is divided into six problems that have been found. The description of the discussion that the author displays is a short statement excerpt from the informant when the interview was conducted. Although the interview excerpts were provided by the informants in a slightly different language, they actually have the same purpose and intent.

The main theme is that in general the problems of students in participating in learning Arabic are 1) differences in educational background, 2) low vocabulary mastery, 3) lack of teacher initiative to develop an Arabic-language environment, 4) lack of language laboratories, 5) lack of learning methods varied, and 6) unsupportive environment.

To make it more interesting, in the following, the author will describe excerpts
from interviews with informants based on the six themes described above. The description of the interview that the author will display is a brief statement excerpt from the informant when the interview was conducted. Although the interview excerpts were conveyed by the informant in a slightly different language, they actually have more or less the same goals and objectives.

**First**, differences in educational background, according to informants one of their problems in understanding Arabic learning is their different educational backgrounds, this theme was stated by informants 1, 3, 8 as excerpts from the bellow:

... I graduated from a public school, so I couldn't take Arabic lessons (informant 1). ... I just learned a new Arabic language subject at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri, so it made me a bit difficult to understand the material (informant 3). ... it was difficult for me to take Arabic lessons because I was previously from a public school where there were no Arabic lessons (informant 8).

**Second**, low vocabulary mastery, according to informants one of their problems in understanding Arabic learning is the lack of memorizing Arabic vocabulary. This theme was stated by informants 2, 3, 8 as excerpts from the bellow:

... in terms of difficulty, namely the mastery of Mufradat (vocabulary) where I myself still have many Mufradats that I do not know/master (informant 2). ... I myself feel that my main difficulty in understanding Arabic learning material is due to the lack of vocabulary that I memorize (informant 3). ... the vocabulary that I memorized so little that it made me less able to follow Arabic lessons (informant 8).

**Third**, lack of teacher initiative to develop an Arabic-speaking environment, this discussion is very interesting because teachers who should be able to set a good example, but teachers are still not motivated to practice Arabic outside the classroom. This theme was stated by informants 4 and 9 as excerpts from the bellow:

... and I see the teacher is lacking in practicing Arabic, it's different when I was at the Islamic boarding school (informant 4). ... we even often use Minang language with our Arabic teacher (informant 9).

**Fourth**, there is no language laboratory, according to the informant, one of their problems in understanding Arabic learning is the unavailability of Arabic language laboratories. This theme was stated by informants 3 and 10 as excerpts from the bellow:

... there are no laboratory facilities to support Arabic lessons (informant 3). ... with a language laboratory, maybe it will be easier for us to liven up the Arabic-speaking atmosphere (informant 10).

**Fifth**, less varied learning methods, according to informants one of their problems in understanding Arabic learning is that learning methods do not vary. This theme was stated by informants 4, 7, 6 as excerpts from the bellow:

... the method used by the teacher when teaching and learning activities are not varied (monotonous) (informant 4). ... Sometimes we get bored learning Arabic because the teacher teaches too monotonously (informant 7). ... The teacher sometimes told us to memorize vocabulary without explaining the material (informant 6).

**Sixth**, unsupportive environment, according to the informant one of their problems in understanding Arabic learning is an environment that is not supportive enough to achieve a good learning process. This was stated by informant as excerpts from the bellow:

... an unsupportive environment, such as many who use Minang or Indonesian, so that it makes me not used to using Arabic

In fact, research and issues related to the problematic aspects of learning Arabic have been widely studied in the world of education (Hizbullah & Mardiah, 2015). However, in this study, the authors will describe these problems according to the author's interviews with informants. Related to students' problems with learning Arabic at the 3 Padang State Aliyah Madrasah, the results of the research actually found six themes as described above. To make it more interesting, the authors will discuss the six problematic themes of this research based on theory, expert opinion and the results of previous research that discusses
these problems in more or less the same context and issues.

First, differences in educational background, the success of an education is inseparable from its supporting factors, one of which is educators (Sanah et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the success of the quality of education is not only borne by educators but also depends on the potential of the students concerned, one of which is their educational background (Busiri, 2021; Setiyawan, 2018).

An educator should be able to understand the differences in each of his students so that learning can run effectively. An understanding of the differences in students needs to be understood not only by educators but also by curriculum developers, prospective teachers, and school principals by diversifying learning according to the diversity of conditions and needs, both concerning the potential of students and the potential of the environment (Wahyuni et al., 2021).

Differences in the characteristics of each individual related to the educational background of students is one of the problems that are often encountered in learning (Setiyawan, 2018). The selection process for accepting new students is considered to be one of the causes of the varying quality of students in one class. The existing selection is less able to capture and get students who have the quality as expected. This is because the selection tools used and the tests tested, especially those held by the government on a national scale, are still general in nature. As a result, not a few prospective new students can enter a study program that is new to them and do not yet have sufficient basic knowledge about the study program they are entering.

Second, low vocabulary mastery, in this context this is indeed a common problem that occurs in almost all students (Astuti, 2016; Masturi et al., 2021; Rizal, 2021). In the results of Thonthowi MA’s study in a paper presented at the 2008 International Arabic seminar in Malang, he stated that among the causes of failure in learning Arabic in Indonesia is that teachers neglect the importance of memorizing Mufradat (vocabulary). As a basic capital for learning Arabic, students should already have between 300-600 vocabularies, because according to him, people who are learning Arabic are the same as people building a house, they must already have building materials and know their respective characters, so all they have to do is install them and just arrange it (Thonthowi, 2018).

The transfer of words from foreign languages into Indonesian can cause problems including: 1) shifts in meaning, such as the word community which comes from the word Musyarakah, in Arabic the meaning of society is participation, participation, togetherness, and can also be interpreted with the word Council which comes from the word Musyarakah and so on. 2) The pronunciation changes from the original sound, like saying from the word kalam which means to say, as for the news (circumstances) which comes from the word Khabar. 3) The pronunciation is fixed but the meaning changes, like word salimah which means in Indonesian, is a word while the word "number" means a sentence, which is a composition of several words that can give meaning (Albantani et al., 2020; Nashoih, 2018; Siregar & Nurhakim, 2018).

Based on some of the research results above, it is clear that the problem of mastery of Mufradat (vocabulary) among students has been a long-standing problem, especially in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. This happens because of the influence of the language and culture of the country of origin or the influence of foreign cultures which makes the use of the Arabic Mufradat not match the true meaning.

Third, lack of teacher initiative to develop an Arabic-language environment, not all problems are problems in learning from students, but problems also occur due to educators including their lack of motivation in practicing Arabic which results in students also being less enthusiastic in learning the Arabic subject (Ramadhan, 2017).

So educators must be motivated to practice Arabic outside of the classroom which is integratively and instrumentally motivated. This motivation will function in an integrative manner if the motivation that grows in learning a foreign language is due to communicating
with native language speakers (Albab, 2019). Where as the instrumental function functions if the motivation encourages someone to have the will to learn a foreign language for a useful purpose.

**Fourth**, absence of language labor, Hizbullah & Mardiah, (2015) Laboratory or what is called in Arabic *ma’mal* with a place to conduct experiments, investigations or tests, and so on related to physics, chemistry, language, and others. In line with the explanation above, in more detail, it is stated that a laboratory or in English laboratory is “a room or building where research or scientific experimentation is carried out; a place where drugs, chemicals, etc are prepared; a place for testing, analyzing and demonstrating techniques, theories and methods as in education and social studies” Siregar & Nurhakim, (2018), a place to conduct research or science experiments; a place to process drugs, chemicals and the like; a place to test, analyze and demonstrate techniques, theories or methods of teaching and social studies.

The language laboratory refers to a set of audio-video electronic equipment consisting of an instructor console as the main machine, equipped with a language learning machine repeater, tape recorder, DVD player, video monitor, headset and student's booth which are installed in a soundproof room (Makruf, 2020; Rozak, 2018). Besides that there are also multimedia computer components as additional components that can be combined with all of them.

**Fifth**, less varied learning methods, according to Risk learning is teaching as "Teaching is the guidance of learning experience". This means teaching is the process of guiding the learning experience (Pramudya et al., 2019). The experience itself is only possible to obtain if the student is actively acting on the environment. Learning is only successful if it goes through a variety of activities. These activities can be classified into physical and spiritual activities. Physical activity is a student active with the limbs, making something, playing, or working. Meanwhile, students who are spiritually active have a working soul (Solihin, 2017).

The psychological factors in learning are as follows: 1) attention, meaning the concentration of psychic energy that is focused on an object of study, 2) observation, is a way of knowing the real world, 3) response, meaning is an image/mark that remains in the memory after people make observations, 4) fantasy, is the ability to form new responses based on existing responses, 5) memory, 6) thinking, 7) talent is one of the human abilities to carry out an activity and has existed since humans existed, and 8) motivation.

According to states that in learning individuals should have three learning styles, according to Bobbide Porter and his colleague Mike Hernack that in every one there are three kinds of learning styles the same even though there will only be one that stands out. The learning styles in question are Visual (related to the eyes), auditory (related to the ears) and kinesthetic (related to movement) (Azis et al., 2020; Rambe & Yarni, 2019; Sianturi, 2021; Zulfiani et al., 2021).

Based on the opinion of the expert above that here the ability of educators is really tested in teaching, where educators are more required to be able to attract the attention of students in learning, especially in learning Arabic, for some students learning Arabic is sometimes boring because we just sit class and read and speak in monotone using Arabic which causes students to get bored quickly and eventually fall asleep plus if the educator who teaches is a teacher who is always serious, only explains while students just sit in chairs while listening to the teacher's explanation, that is very boring and makes the eyes sleepy.

**Sixth**, unsupportive environment, the quality of the language environment is very important for a learner to be successful in learning a new language (Aini et al., 2019; Amani et al., 2021). What is meant by the language environment is everything that is heard and seen by the learner in relation to the second language being studied. Included in the language environment are situations in restaurants or shops, conversations with friends, when watching television, while reading newspapers, in the process of teaching and learning in class, reading textbooks, and so on. The quality of this language environment is
something that is important for learners to gain success in learning a second language (Anwar et al., 2017; Arifin, 2018; Alawiyah et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

This research has succeeded in uncovering six problems of students in learning Arabic at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 3 Padang, West Sumatra. The six problems are differences in educational background, low vocabulary mastery, lack of teacher initiative to develop an Arabic language environment, no language laboratories, less varied learning methods, and an unsupportive environment. The six findings in this study can at least become a reference and guide for future researchers in examining issues that are relevant to this context as well as different issues.

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